



**The**

# **Sandpaper**

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Volume 4, Number 5

"The Pearl of the Desert"

April 2000

## **Commander, Navy Region Southwest**

# **RADM Ruehe shares vision for the future**

RADM Frederic R. Ruehe, Commander, Navy Region Southwest, recently sat down with Navy Compass reporter Journalist Seaman Apprentice Beth Johnson for a one-on-one interview. Adm. Ruehe assumed command of the Region on Feb. 4.

Ruehe received his commission through the Navy ROTC program at the University of Illinois in 1973 and was designated a naval aviator in January 1976. He commanded Helicopter Antisubmarine squadrons Light 33 and 40, and USS Belleau Wood (LHA 3). Before assuming command of Navy Region Southwest, Ruehe served as executive assistant to the chief of staff at Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, Norfolk, Va.

**Admiral, what are your goals for Navy Region Southwest during your tenure here?**

A big goal is to complete the regionalization process, which has been

under way for the past two years. I think that there is a lot of work to be done to complete the process, and the challenge is to change the command infrastructure while ensuring that we can sustain or improve upon our readiness support our the fleet and tenant commands.

Some background on that is that with regionalization, we experienced a significant degree of command consolidation. Today, the base commanding officers, not only in the San Diego metro area, but in California and Nevada, report to the Region, and also receive their funding through the Region office for their programs on each base. That shift, from type commander funding, to funding from the Region gave us responsibility for a significant role in supporting each type commander's readiness and, therefore, the readiness of the forces that deploy. So we have a significant challenge in not only main-



**RADM Ruehe**

taining the infrastructure of the bases, but also directly supporting these readiness of the commands.

**What challenges do you foresee in the near future?**

The first and largest challenge is to try to maintain the efficiencies and effective management that we have realized through regionalization, which is essentially a matrix type of management. Now a single program manager is responsible for a single program all across the Region, which I think provides a significant degree of equity with the benefits of regionwide oversight. The challenge we face in the matrix management system which centralizes resource funding is that we must continue to maintain the integrity of the individual bases, as well as the integrity of the commands which I believe protects the interests of the individual Sailor.

**What is your strategy for dealing with the forecasted downsizing within the Region?**

This is a significant challenge, and the

*See Ruehe, page 6*

## **Command Master Chief retires after 30 years**

AVCM(AW/SW) Wayne E. Liebzeit will shift colors May 4 at 2 p.m. in a retirement ceremony at the NAF Sports Center.

Liebzeit has been the Command Master Chief since reporting onboard in December 1998.

The Michigan native started out his naval career in 1963 as a Hospital Corpsman. It was in this capacity that he served in Vietnam from June 1965-August 1966 and earned his a Purple Heart.

In 1967, he separated from active duty to pursue studies at the University of Michigan. In 1973 he returned to active duty this time as an Aviation Electronics Technician.

Liebzeit has enjoyed tours with VQ-2, Rota Spain; Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif.; VAQ-34, HSL-45, North Island, Calif.; USS Kansas City (AOR 3); USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19).

The top military awards he has earned are three Navy Commendation medals and one Navy Achievement medal along with his Purple Heart.

Master Chief Liebzeit is married to the former Veronica Judith Moore of New Haven, Michigan. They have a son, James.



**AVCM(SW/AW) Liebzeit**



## Captain's Corner

Last month was truly a busy month. We were at the height of our winter visitors season and we hosted the largest air show in our history. For all of you out there that participated, THANKS! We could not have done it without your participation and dedication. Our air show was not only large, but it was fantastic. I have had many of the performers already inquire into when next year's show will be. They want to come back because of the way you treated them. The performers think we are one of the best air shows in the entire country. WEARE!!!

We are going into that time of year that is more commonly called Spring Break. Please be extra careful if you are traveling during this time frame because the roads may be more crowded than usual, and not all of the drivers are practicing good driving habits. In fact, there are some real idiots out there on the road. They can only see the front of their vehicle and don't care if they hurt anyone, just as long as they can go fast. Watch out for them. Give yourself time and travel smartly, even if you are just going into town.

We have opened the large swimming pool. All the work that has been going on for the past few months has now paid off. What a beautiful place to spend a lazy weekend or a

couple of hours after work. The water is nice and cool and the sun is hot. Come out and enjoy the swimming.

We have also just opened up some more housing units in the Wherry Housing Project. The contractors are doing a magnificent job on these units and we are all waiting for the next group of houses to come to us. We should have the project completed within the next couple of months and we can get more of our sailors back onto the base. If you have not seen the restored units, you should come to the next grand opening and take a look. You will be impressed with the quality material and workmanship.

On May 11, RADM Ruehe and other members of the Southwest Region Executive Steering Committee will be visiting NAF El Centro. The group of approximately 40 personnel will be staying overnight and departing the following afternoon. This will be our chance to show off the facility the metro area. While most of you will not be involved in the briefings, some "stranger" may be in your spaces asking questions. Answer them truthfully and to the best of your ability.

This coming week is the celebration of the Easter Holidays. In Christianity, this is in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For those wishing to take part



in services, a Good Friday service will be held in the base chapel at 5:30 p.m. and an Easter Sunday Protestant service will begin at 11 a.m.

In closing, let me dwell on our American History and trivia. We all have heard the poem about Paul Revere and his midnight ride from Boston to Concord, but were you aware that Mr Revere did not finish his midnight ride? He had been detained by the British so Dr. Samuel Prescott, who accompanied him, completed the ride. Oh well, at least we know the lanterns got lit.

--Capt. L.W. Crane

## The Sandpaper

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This newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services and their families. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense (DoD), or the U.S. Navy and do not imply endorsement thereof.

The editorial content is prepared and provided by the NAF Public Affairs Office. The deadline for submissions is noon the last Monday of the month prior to publication. All correspondence, articles and letters to the editor should be addressed to:

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## From the CMC

This will be my last submission to the Sandpaper, as I will retire May 4 at 2 p.m. in the Base Sports Center.

ETCM(SS) Hipp from Ground Electronics will be assuming my duties until the Detailer finds another full time CMC. ETCM(SS) Hipp will do a fine job and I know he will get outstanding support from you all.

This base is very special to me as I have met some of the best people I have ever worked with. As I will say on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, it's the people that make a duty station, and the way you are treated. I will miss you all.

There are a few things that are going on in the not far distant future that everybody needs to get involved with. First of all, I don't care who you vote for but vote! Many of your fellow Americans have paid in life and limb to keep that privilege for you to use.

***I don't care who you vote for but vote! Many of your fellow Americans have paid in life and limb to keep that privilege for you to use.***

The other thing is the ongoing Navy / Marine Corps Relief annual fund drive. It's the only organization I know of that's set up for our members and families.

After the retirement ceremony, my wife, Judi, and I will reside in Payson, Ariz. We both extend an invitation to any who get up that way to stop in and say hi. Our address is 820 W. Pinto, Payson, AZ. 85541.

Thanks for a great tour!



# Pearls of the Desert



Navy Photos By JOC(SW) Donna Corvin

AZAN Sheli Sanford, March's Sailor of the Month, receives a Saving Bond from Navy League President Chuck Jernigan. The league, which meets at the Mirage Club every 1st Monday of the month, always recognizes the Sailor of the Month with this award.

## Chapel Call

### Killing Time

Read: Ephesians 5:1-17

**Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time. -Ephesians 5:15-16**

Bible In One Year: Judges 19-21, Luke 7:31-50

A friend of mine was sitting on a park bench with his hands folded, staring into the distance. When I asked what he was doing, he replied, "Oh, just killing time."

What a cruel thing to do to something as valuable as time! Why kill it? Time is given to us to be cultivated, not murdered. Time should never be wasted but used to the best advantage.

Of course, there are times when we must relax and rest. Even Jesus said to His disciples, "Come aside . . . and rest a while" (Mk. 6:31). But that was not "killing time," it was using time for restoration. After they had rested, they would be able to use their time more fruitfully and profitably.

If a fraction of the time we waste could be used to pray, read the Bible, witness to others, visit a friend in distress, or comfort someone who is grieving, what a difference it would make! Today, when you have leisure time, ask yourself how you can best improve those extra moments. You may think I am being narrowminded, but the Bible is clear-we are to be "wise, redeeming the time" (Eph. 5:16).

Today, see how much good you can do for God and others-not how little you can get by with. It is not true that we can "make up lost time." It is gone forever!

*God's people have so much to do*

*In serving Christ today*

*That they should use their precious time*

*To share, to love, to pray. -JDB*

**Time-use it or lose it!**

**The following personnel have recently been recognized for their outstanding achievements.**

#### NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

MSC(SW) Russell  
AG2 Bennett

#### SAILOR OF THE MONTH

AO3 Nguyen -- February  
AZAN Sanford -- March

#### GOOD CONDUCT

OM1 Gordon -- Fourth Award  
OS1 Swanegan -- Fourth Award  
AC3 Montano -- First Award

#### LENGTH OF SERVICE

Ruben Rodriquez -- 20 years  
Geoffrey Larkin -- 10 years

#### LETTER OF APPRECIATION

LT Beredo  
Steve Monteleone  
Ricardo Rivera  
Fred Rivera

#### COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

ACCS(AW) Friel -- DEFY program

#### REENLISTMENTS

AO1 Baldwin  
AO2 Postma  
AO3 Postma

# Bravo Zulu!





*Centinela Prison Fireman Ray Vega goes over crucial searching techniques with students before they enter the 230-foot maze called the Mobile Training Lab. The semi-truck trailer is two stories of twisting, narrow and small passageways . The lab can be modified to 10 levels of increasing difficulty to those negotiating the spaces Each student's forward progress is monitored with the use of pressure-sensitive mats that cover the floors of the trainer.*



*Students gather in the shade on the 98-degree day as they wait their turn to enter the Mobile Training Laboratory provided by the San Diego City Fire Department*



*Students learned to fight fuel fires with the help of the Flammable Liquid and Gas trainer provided by the California Office of the State Fire Marshall. Each group of four hose teams fought fires on four different fire scenarios*



*Sixty Mexican Fire Service employees from all regions of Mexico traveled to NAF El Centro to learn fire fighting techniques and swift water training. All instructors were volunteer the from NAF, the Imperial Valley and San Diego City Fire Departments.*

## ***Fire Fighters fight fiery flames on NAF*** Base, Imperial Valley, San Diego City firemen train 'Bomberos'

**Story, Photos by JOC(SW) Donna Corvin**

The fire reached out its angry fingers toward them as if calling them to battle. The two teams of fire fighters assemble and are ready to attack its nemesis. They work as one to combat the billowing flame. In a matter of minutes the fire is out, the enemy defeated. Then a voice is heard saying, "Okay, back up and try again!" The teams back-up with their hoses, the fire is restarted and they attack it again.

This scene was repeated many times as 60 Mexican fire fighters received advanced fire fighting training here from Imperial Valley and San Diego City Fire Department volunteers on April 12-13.

"For 35 years, the California Fire Chief's Association has assisted the Mexican Fire Service in upgrading their operation, training, and equipment," said NAF Fire Chief Steve Monteleone. "This year, 20 volunteer instructors from NAF El Centro, Brawley, Centinela Prison, El Centro, Imperial County, Calexico and San Diego City Fire Departments helped in this education process."

The bomberos, fire fighters in Spanish, attacked live fires in the Flammable Liquid and Gas, FLAG, trainer. The trainer which simu-



*One firefighter "douses" himself to keep cool in the nearly 100-degree heat on the flightline*

lated fuel pipe fires and fuel spill fire was provided by the California State Fire Marshals office. Randy Shelton, Pipeline Training Coordinator, also acted as the on site Safety Officer for the FLAG training.

While some bomberos were combating fires, others were learning to negotiate small crawl spaces in the Mobile Training Lab. This lab is actually a 230-foot semi trailer and is a maze of passageways, dead end compartments and ladders that lead to nowhere. To make this training realistic, they have to crawl through the trailer in pitch-black darkness and in full fire fighting gear.

"Some places are only 18 inches in diameter," said Robert Carlos, a San Diego City Fire Department medic. "The student has to remove his breathing apparatus, back through the hole, pull his gear through and then put it back on. It's not easy."

The bomberos also received classroom instruction in fire fighting principles. At the same time these events were taking place on NAF, area fighters were teaching them swift water training at two locations off base.

The students received graduation certificates during a dinner at Balboa Park in San Diego.

# Enlisted advancement changes announced

By Lynette Williams

CNP Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Changes have been made to the Navy Enlisted Advancement System (NEAS) to streamline the enlisted advancement and promotion process.

As noted in NAVADMIN 42/00, the following changes are now effective. Personal Advancement Requirement (PARS) have been eliminated for advancement exam eligibility. They are considered outdated and redundant due to the advent of watch station personal qualification standards. This is a timesaver for both the Sailor preparing for the exam and also in the updating of service records.

In addition to PARS, training manuals and non-resident training courses are also no longer required for advancement exam eligibility. Though not required for eligibility, the manuals and courses will still be available and Sailors completing them will increase their advancement opportunities.

Another change to the NEAS allows Chief Petty Officers and above to serve on local examining boards to administer, proctor, handle, destroy and forward advancement exam returns to the Naval Education and Training Professional Development and

Technology Center.

Advancement to E-3 is now automatic after the minimum time in rate of nine months and as long as a favorable recommendation for advancement is on the most recent performance eval. E-2s are no longer required to route a special request chit

Finally, the active advancement exam dates have been modified for E-4 through E-6 exams. Beginning September 2000 the exams in March and Sept. will be as follows:

E-4 exam: First Tuesday

E-5 exam: Second Tuesday

E-6 exam: Third Tuesday



Navy photo by PH3 Class Josh Treadwell

*Sailors take the PO3 Navy-wide advancement exam on the "mess decks" aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69). Eisenhower is currently deployed in the Adriatic Sea.*

## Ruehe

*cont. from page 1*

efficiencies we've realized through regionalization are examples of how we've responded to decreased civilian and military manpower, but even if we weren't regionalized, the reduction of manpower in the Navy has been ongoing for the last 10 years. We're doing our best now to level out and maintain the current manning levels, which are approximately 370,000 active duty, and about 90,000 Reserves. So our challenge now is to ensure that we have appropriate skills and qualities that go along with that quantity of people. At the same time, we are trying to compensate for the disruption that was caused by the recent changes as a result of BRAC (base realignment and closure). Examples of the changes are the movements of our naval air squadrons from Miramar. Expansion of the role — and growth of base population — at NAS Lemoore, closure of bases in the San Francisco area, and movement of

the E2 air wing from Miramar up to Point Mugu (Calif.), which changes the mission and role of that base. We must continue our efforts to streamline and become more efficient in the process of change. That'll be a battle we face everyday. Our goal is to ensure that we can manage this downsizing of our workforce, both civilian and military, to minimize the impact of reduced manning/full-time equivalent realized by many of our regionalization efficiencies. There's a significant line to draw when we talk philosophically about downsizing, we're focused on finding efficiencies and cost savings, to do that we must reduce our infrastructure. My focus continues to be on both the preservation of adequate shore duty billets for our military personnel, and managing the downsizing of our civilian workforce to minimize potential impacts.

**What do you see as the roles of the base commanding officers in light of the changes that are taking place?**

Frankly, I believe the commanding of-

ficer has become more important now than ever before. We have historically relied on the commanding officer to be the person on the scene, to lead his command, and to ensure that his people are cared for.

I've outlined for you what may seem to be a period of intense change within the Region, and to compensate for that, we are relying on the commanding officers to carry much of the load in terms of implementation. We rely on the commanding officer of the individual bases to maintain a balance aboard each base, to ensure that they are prepared to assume the duties as on-scene commander in case of a mishap or incident.

A recent example is Point Mugu and Port Hueneme when the Alaska Airlines fight went down. They immediately mobilized and were key to ensuring that the rescue, search and recovery operations were successful. We depend on the base commanding officers to ensure that what

*See Ruehe, page 7*



# The pool's open, the weather's great, come on in!

*NAF El Centro's large pool was officially re-opened during a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 6. Assisting Commanding Officer Larry Crane in cutting the ribbon are (l - r) Gordon Starnes, ROICC Resident Engineer, Jim Dohna, Navy Southwest Region ROICC Liaison, LT John White, Public Works Officer, CO, LT Robert Keiser, Resident Officer in Charge of Construction and Gordon Starnes, ROICC Engineering Technician. The pool hours are 11 a.m. to dusk everyday*

Navy Photos by JOC(SW) Donna Corvin



## Ruehe

*cont. from page 6*

happens on their base is both coordinated and effective. Of course the Region's job is to ensure that they have the tools and training to do their job.

**How do you see regionalization evolving over the next year?**

I think this will be a phased process. Right now we're in a stage where we're working to achieve stability. We want to show the folks that as we proceed through this regionalization process that there is a plan, and we want to put that plan in place so they can have some consistency in their workplace day to day. That's our short-term goal.

Our long-term goal is to reassure our people that they are vital to our business in the Region, and ultimately our success. When we talk about support and readiness for the fleet; it's their efforts that are critical. We need to ensure that they recognize that. I'm going to take every opportunity I can to let them know that they're very important to us.

In the longer term, we need to repeatedly step back and assess our position to make sure that we have balanced our programs and meet the dynamics of our changing Navy. We will ensure our bases can continue to provide the highest degree of support to our operational forces.

**Will there be more housing units added in San Diego to take some of the concern**

**for housing off of the Sailors?**

Providing adequate housing for our people in San Diego has been a challenge since I first came here in 1973. Our waiting list for enlisted housing is currently about 6,000 families and that's a lot of people waiting for homes. Those people are now making their way into communities here and, as you know, the metro area is a very expensive place to live. The Navy is working to ease this hardship several ways. Hopefully through the combination of these approaches, we'll be able to ensure San Diego is a desirable assignment for our Navy families.

The first approach is to improve the existing housing, combined with some innovative construction efforts to build new housing. We are moving ahead with a Public-Private Venture plan to construct new housing at the former Naval Training Center, and also to replace the housing units at Cabrillo Heights. We expect construction at NTC to begin sometime in calendar year '01. We are also doing our best to partner with landlords, who rent to our people, to make sure that they know that military personnel are good tenants, and will minimize up-front fee requirements.

The third part of this is the recent announcement by the Secretary of Defense that over the next few years, the Basic Allowance for Housing will be raised so that Sailors will be compensated by paygrade in an effort to minimize out-of-pocket housing costs. This program should go a long

way to alleviate the burden of living on the San Diego economy for our people.

**You are a helicopter pilot by trade. What has been your best duty station?**

Speaking to a San Diego crowd, I'd say North Island has been my best duty station. Speaking as a naval officer, I'd say my best duty station was my overseas assignment when I was the commander of an LHA in Sasebo, Japan. That assignment combined all of the things we seek in a Navy career. Exotic assignments, liberty ports throughout the Western Pacific, and an operating tempo that was higher than here, but provided us an opportunity to do what we were trained to do. We operated with the Marines on a regular basis. It was challenging, very fun and very rewarding.

**Is your family happy to be back in San Diego?**

People have asked me that, and coming back to San Diego is great. We move a lot in the Navy and when you move away from a place you close the door behind you and try not to wring your hands too much about what you're missing. You look ahead to the next duty station and think about the good things that are coming your way. Coming back to San Diego, for my family, has re-opened a door we had partly closed over eight years ago. We've re-established many friendships. We're very happy to be back and see friends that we've known for 20 years that we've had to say good bye to, too many times.

# ***Parting Shots***

2000 Airshow revisited: 45,000 attended



*Navy Photos by Marine  
Corps Sgt. Marshal Paul*